The Mediation of Death and the Temporality of the Scroll (Japan, c.1200)

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From the earliest days of the discipline, art historians have argued that the scroll alone achieves the impossible: the continual pictorial depiction of temporal phenomena. Given that the inability to depict time was commonly held to be the defining limitation of premodern visual art, the assertion is rather bold. The scroll’s privileged relationship to the temporal is in many ways a straightforward function of its material parameters. Since the marked surface of a scroll often extends beyond the field of vision, the format allows for the production of a pictorial field that is either longitudinal or laterally unbounded. To behold such a picture requires a tactile, sequential, and definitively linear process of viewing. It is this material, physical continuity that invites the metaphorical extension. Material spans are made to index temporal ones. This is the weak claim, but there is a stronger one as well. For instance, the art historian Kurt Weitzmann, in his formative study on the topic, proclaimed the scroll to be nothing less than the premiere format for giving visual form to all manner of narratives (biography and history included). Only the illustrated scroll, Weitzmann argued, could exceed the ‘basic text’ by capturing the ‘transitory element’ of discourse; and it did so, moreover, in a medium that was transportable to other locations and transposable to other media. The primacy Weitzmann accorded the pictorial scroll is all the more striking when one considers the prevailing logocentrism of his disciplinary moment. In its most aggregative form, the claim would be that the medium of the scroll allows pictorial marks to mimic, exceed, and even expropriate the temporal dimension of written and spoken discourse.

Manuscript scrolls are not the antiquated topic they may seem to be. In fact, in its afterlife, the scroll format continues to structure present visual culture. While cinema (itself, until recently, a projection from a scrolled film) may have superseded both the codex and the scroll as the default reference metaphor for narrative, one need look no further than digital, screen-bound media (such as Courtauld Books Online) to see that scrolling is, once again, the primary means of navigation of the ‘image-world’ that is constitutive of late capitalism. The physical scroll and the metaphor of scrolling both imply a degree of continuity, yet as we will discover, it is possible to work against such continuity: to create disruptions, effect misreadings, and represent complex temporal structures that are much more analogous to lived experience than the simple timeline metaphor would suggest. Accordingly, this chapter will raise both a historical context (that of premodern Japan) and a specific object (a set of memorial handscrolls) in order to scrutinise the ways in which the temporal extensions of the medium might be used to mediate the cognitive dissonance and chronological disarray that death precipitates.

The goal, however, is not to demonstrate an exotic historical exception. For the study of the scroll in Japan is a topic with more global implications than it may at first seem. The reasons are several. Beyond the sheer volume of extant scrolls in Japan is the primacy of place accorded paintings and calligraphies in scroll format—both vertical and horizontal—in the Japanese art historical canon. Japanese visual culture was, and to some extent remains, an image-world highly structured by the scroll. To make this clear, some historical context is in order. Whereas the codex is said to have eclipsed the rotulus in fifth-century Europe, in Japan, inscription, scroll, print, binding, and codex were not necessarily successive technologies. In fact, it was not until the seventh century that instrumental literacy (as opposed to alegible uses of writing) was adopted, meaning both paper—a first-century continental invention—and the scroll were present at the very dawn of domestic writing. The early advent of print further complicates matters, for throughout medieval and early-modern Japanese history, print and manuscript remained dual and not necessarily competing technologies of textual reproduction. One case in point is found among the earliest extant Japanese scrolls: the celebrated One Million Pagodas of Dhāranī (Hyakumantō darani 百万塔陀羅尼), a series of one million fascicles printed with incantatory texts, each stored within an individual wooden pagoda (figs 7.1 and 7.2). They were created in 764–770 at the behest of the Japanese empress Shōtoku (718–770) and subsequently distributed, in groups of 100,000, to ten temples charged with the performance of Buddhist ceremonial for the purpose of defending the realm. While these texts were not produced for reading, by the eleventh century print was used to produce texts for that purpose as well. Even following the rise of commercial book publishing in the early seventeenth century, the manuscript scroll did not disappear. It retains currency to this day in certain East Asian religious and artistic contexts. Indeed, given the prospect (or spectre) of a post-print world, it may very well be that the manuscript scroll will outlive its purported successor. Such larger context aside, the specific manuscripts that concern us here are among the most enigmatic artefacts in the Japanese art-historical canon: a set of palimpsestic scrolls commonly known as the Eyeless Sūtras (Menashikyō 目無経) (figs 7.3–7.6). Once believed to have spanned some forty metres, only two thirds of the manuscript survives, parcelled into two-dozen fragments and housed in no fewer than seven collections. They once comprised a four-volume transcription of an antiquated translation of several Buddhist scriptures: the Sūtra of Golden Light (Konkōmyōkyō 金光明経, in Sanskrit Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra, T 663.18) and a one-volume, condensed version of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra (Rishukyō 理佛経, in Sanskrit Adhyātmaikātikā prajñāpāramitā, T 243.8). Paleographic analysis has led scholars to surmise that the scrolls were produced as ‘merit-transfer’ sūtras (tsuzenkōyō 追善経) for the repose of Emperor GoShirakawa (1127–1192). The practice is predicated upon the belief that by copying a sūtra one generates karmic merit that can then be transferred to the deceased. An increase in merit in
turn helps to enable a propitious rebirth, if not a full escape from the cycle of samsāra itself. Such manuscripts were often produced communally, and they represent a potent intersection of inscription and soteriology, wherein collective replication played a role in processing both memory and loss. Strikingly, the sūtras of the Eyeless were transcribed over phantasmatic and monochromatic line drawings of chiefly domestic scenes of roughly contemporaneous affairs (similar in subject to ‘genre painting’ in Euro-American art history). Of the more than four hundred figures who appear beneath the sūtra texts, a mere nineteen have full physiognomic details, hence the ‘eyeless’ moniker.

Present understanding of the scrolls rests almost solely upon the interpretation of its two problematic colophons. The first, found at the end of the third fascicle of the Golden, states in Si-no-Japanese kanbun: ‘Copied on the first day of the fourth month of the third year of the Kenkyū era [1192]’ (建久三年四月一日書寫之), followed thereafter by an illegible mark believed to be the cipher of the transcriptionist. The second, found at the end of the Perfection, is much more detailed. The art historian Akiyama Terukazu interpreted the inscription as follows:

The tonsured Emperor GoShirakawa and Nun X’s painting, when not yet completed [was interred by] the emperor’s demise, whereupon the paper was used for copying this sūtra. The calligraphy [of the sūtra text] is by [former] Major Counselor Master Jōken [and the] Sanskrit letters are by Master Jōhen. In the eighth month of the fourth year of the Kenkyū era, this scroll was respectfully received from the abbot [Shōken] by Shinken.

The inscription raises numerous questions, and the English translation necessitates smoothing over several ambiguities in the original. First, the ‘fourth year of the Kenkyū era’ would be 1193, a full year after the inscription found on the Golden volume; the disparity calls into question the notion that these were originally produced as a set. The ambiguities of the kanbun grammar further support various readings: one is that the drawings themselves were in the possession of the emperor and the anonymous nun, while another reading is that the emperor and nun were the ones who drew the drawings. Physiognomic lack, in addition to the compositional disjointedness and monochromy, has led scholars to presume that the papers were disjeta membra, repurposed and assembled in haste upon the Emperor’s death. Accordingly, present scholarly consensus holds that pictures of the Eyeless are unfinished underdrawings made in preparation for a deluxe manuscript illuminating one of the novelistic tales, such as the Tale of Genji, for which this period in Japanese luxury literature is celebrated.

If the scrolls were indeed created for the repose of Emperor GoShirakawa, perhaps the most famous emperor in premodern Japanese history, then this contributes to the intrigue. GoShirakawa’s death marks the end of Japan’s halcyon, ‘classical’ Heian era (794–1192) and the beginning of four centuries of intermittent internecine war and almost seven centuries of military governments. Opinions on his reign vary. Some cast him as a profligate who cost the imperial family political control of the state, while others see him as a skilled strategist who levied soft power to manipulate the fractious military and aristocratic classes. Be that as it may, the Emperor was a zealous patron of the arts and a legendary collector of illuminated handscrolls. Indeed, so intense was his fervour that one post-war art historian retro-diagnosed him as suffering from a pathological, scroll-induced mania. Given this situation, the unorthodox design of the scrolls seems particularly curious. One might imagine that the ultimate manuscript made for perhaps the most handscroll-obsessed emperor would be not only complete, but also artistically lavish.

These enigmatic artefacts are rich documents of Heian pictorial culture, yet scholarship on the Eyeless has been blinkered by focus upon two issues: the identity of the anonymous nun and the identity of the narrative tale that the images are held to illustrate. For the better part of a century, the primary goal has been to segment, splice, and shuffle the pages—a purportedly reparative enterprise—in order to ‘return’ the paintings to the order they would have been in had the illustrated narrative manuscript been completed. Rigour notwithstanding, such attempts are undeniably counterfactual, and result from the deep-seated methodological habit of explaining images by way of their textual sources. It is symptomatic, it seems, of an enervated Panofskian iconology perpetually arrested at its secondary stage. And the reconfigured and doctored subject of analysis is a nonexistent, never-realised object that never would have had the opportunity to be seen or to participate in the recursions and replications that constitute visual culture. The Eyeless is an excellent example of the way in which an uncritical text-and-image approach can sometimes lead one astray.

Given the context of creation (if the colophons are to be believed) as well as the unbelievable sophistication of manuscript, it seems unlikely that GoShirakawa’s memorial scroll was created simply by cobbling together, willy-nilly, recycled images from a bevy of unfinished works. By contrast, for the remainder of this essay, I would like to demonstrate the types of knowledge that might be
excavated by taking this artefact at face value. The first premise to dispel is the notion that these images are incomplete. One must bear in mind that the ritual identity of these objects as implements within mortuary ceremonial must take precedence over our modern understanding of these fascicles as 'illustrated manuscripts'. From a ritual point of view, they were undeniably complete since it was the sūtra-creation process that mattered. Accordingly, the eyeless fascicles represent finished, important, and sophisticated illustrated sūtras, and not the sketchy remnants of an abortive illustrated manuscript. Their ritual identity, however, does not necessarily proscribe art historically. It is neither ahistorical nor orientalist to scour the surface of these scrolls for moments of visual interest and hermeneutic insight. On the contrary, doing so restores 'historical dignity' to a marked surface long deemed unworthy of such close looking.23

Let us begin with the medium itself, especially its claim to be continuous. Most simply, one can conceive of the scroll as a continuous band, a line expanded to sufficient breadth to support other representational lines. Yet at a material level, rarely are such bands continuous. Whether bound into a book or imbricated into a scroll, all paper-based texts are composed of discontinuous base units or sheets. Hence a paper scroll is, literally speaking, 'paginated', or at least segmented. This may seem like a quibble, but it directs attention to the fact that early paper in East Asia was likely seen as a substitute silk.24 Unlike the paper scroll, continuity does inhere in a bolt of silk, and paper scrolls—as proxy textiles—inherited this aura of continuity. Indeed, the Buddhist scripture-rall canon, a corpus that played a catalytic role in the spread of the scroll and literacy to Japan, is comprised of sūtras (般若, in Chinese jīng, in Japanese kyō), a term whose etymology is traceable to the continuous threads of a textile.

Hence what distinguishes the format is not physical continuity so much as contiguity, a syntactic and metaphorical linearity. This aspect of the medium was most famously explored by Franz Wickhoff in his celebrated 1895 analysis of the Vienna Genesis, wherein he proposed a tripartite taxonomy of strategies for the depiction of a narrative text: complementary, isolating, and continuous.25 The latermost term designated narratives broken into a 'continuous series of related circumstances passing, smoothly and unbroken, one into another, just as during a river voyage the landscape of the banks seems to glide before our eyes'.26 In critical response, Weitzmann proposed his well-known counter-formulation (admittedly based upon the earlier work of Carl Robert) of simultaneous, monoscenic, and cyclic.27 While ideas of pictorial narrative have since progressed far beyond this trichotomy, its influence is still often felt.28 According to Weitzmann, the cyclic involved a 'series of consecutive compositions' arranged in a manner with 'physical relation' suggestive of the continuity and causation meant to link them.29 Scenes might be arranged in any manner, but scrolls necessitate tight sequencing along a single vector. Accordingly, as with what Meyer Schapiro called the hypo-semiotic valence of a canvas,30 even a blank scroll presupposes what might be called a 'material' or 'ground-spat', a non-discursive and aniconic sense of continuity and sequence that structures any given arrangement of representational marks it might bear.31 Since scrolls were both manuscript and pictorial supports, the directionality of the flow of writing determined the temporal valence. It was this bleed from text-space into picture-space that led Weitzmann to note that one reads scroll-bound images more than those in other media.32 Similarly, while by no means universal, it was the right-before-left, top-before-bottom structure of premodern Japanese writing that provided the general semiotic substrate for the ground of Japanese scrolls.

The ground-span should not be conflated, however, with the chronology of the depicted narrative. This distinction was highlighted by the philosopher Nelson Goodman who, without reference to the century of scholarship that preceded him, put forth a somewhat reductive but nevertheless useful account of pictorial narrative based upon the observation that narratives are rarely told in the order in which the events themselves occurred.33 In Goodman’s terms, there is a difference between the chronology of the telling and the told.34 A great deal of the pleasure of narrative stems from the rich tension between such disparate chronologies: the uptake, the timespan of the embodied telling or reading, the elastic temporal dynamics of the discourse, and the ultimate way in which one attempts to weave several chronological threads into a comprehensible whole. Not coincidentally, perhaps, Goodman’s prime example for demonstrating this fact was Japanese: the Picture Hall of Horyūji Temple, in which five large eleventh-century paintings were used to architecturally construct the biography of Prince Shōtoku (575–622).35 The events of the prince’s life are distributed in three dimensions in a complex manner that is more faithful to cartography than chronology (fig. 7.7). Included too, as Goodman notes, are moments from the prince’s past lives. For according to Buddhist soteriology, all lives (Shōtoku’s included) were understood as single links within long chains of karmically motivated rebirths, thus making the visibility of one’s life even more polytopic and polychronic, since diverse scenes from diverse lives in diverse geographies

![Image](https://example.com/image1.jpg)

**Fig. 7.5**

![Image](https://example.com/image2.jpg)

**Fig. 7.6**
might feature in the telling of a single ‘biography’. In other words, lives are not lived ‘in order’, and if the ‘book of life’ metaphor holds at all, it is a highly intertextual one.

In Shōtoku’s pictorial biography, the sharp spatial departure from chronology led Goodman to call it ‘twisted’. While a given fabula will often withstand severe chronological twisting; at a certain point, he tells us, it collapses. It then transforms into something quite different from narrative: a case study, a character study, or simply ‘something else’.34 Doubtless, the Eyeless’ concatenated montage of pictorial scenes represents a prime example of a narrative twisted out of recognition, so much so that there is no longer a story to reconstruct. The purportedly narrative illustrations, once vacuated of their narrative, enter into this new ontological realm. The pictorial substrate hence represents a long, protracted stasis, twisted to such an extent that it now defies the defining feature of the medium.

Forensic evidence supports the claim that the pictures may never have been for an illustrated narrative at all, or at least that the compilers of the Eyeless were keen to transform these pictures from narrative illustrations into something quite different. Close looking reveals that the compilers attempted to mitigate pictorial discontinuity. According to the fukinuki-yatai (literally ‘blown-off roof’) perspectival system used in the Eyeless, we are granted access into architectural interiors through a dollhouse-like perspective that results in strong diagonal architectural lines. While alignment is one thing, it also appears that there is extensive in-painting. This can be ascertained from the presence of lines awkwardly laid in a much darker hue than the thin, carefully applied strokes that predomi-nate (figs 7.8–7.10).35 While alignment is one thing, it also appears that there is extensive in-painting. This can be ascertained from the presence of lines awkwardly laid in a much darker hue than the thin, carefully applied strokes that predomi-nate (figs 7.8–7.10). While alignment is one thing, it also appears that there is extensive in-painting. This can be ascertained from the presence of lines awkwardly laid in a much darker hue than the thin, carefully applied strokes that predomi-nate (figs 7.8–7.10). While alignment is one thing, it also appears that there is extensive in-painting. This can be ascertained from the presence of lines awkwardly laid in a much darker hue than the thin, carefully applied strokes that predomi-nate (figs 7.8–7.10).

In light of the above, the Eyeless ‘reads’ like a montage of courtly scenes similar to those of the departed Emperor’s world, but arranged in a manner that disrupts one’s ability to read them as a narrative. There is, in a sense, no progression: repeated hypotaxis without paratactic development. We are confronted with an entirely story arrested in a perpetual present, just as the deceased often seems suspended in the process of mourning as a collection of anachronistic memories, anecdotes, and images that seem in tension with the unforgiving perdurance of the deceased’s absence.37 Similarly, through a process of defragmentation, the various pictorial scenes of the Eyeless, each with its own internal chronology, have been assembled, doctored, and sutured into a continuum in a process not unlike the temporally unstructured activity of recalling the various scenes one remembers from the life of the deceased. In other words, the Eyeless represents not his life, perhaps, but its absence.

It was well established in GoShirakawa’s time that a scroll could be used to depict biography. The clearest example of this is the genre of pictorial hagiography known as ‘illustrated vitae of esteemed monks’ (kōsōden-e 高僧伝絵), in which the lives and deeds of eminent monks were recounted, often with alternating passages of picture and calligraphy. Yet as the Eyeless is a historical memorial and not a literary or religious hagiography, its relationship to the Emperor is both more intimate and more oblique. It need not contain mimetic representations of GoShirakawa’s life in order to represent him.38 Instead of showing GoShirakawa situated within his world, the Eyeless represents the courtly world in which he lived, only now eerily estranged, populated by faceless, phantasmatic figures who seem like mannequins perpetually going through the motions of courtly life. Freed from any specific narrative they are rendered tokens of the narrative type. In other words, the pictures of the Eyeless present the world of the Emperor emptied of subjectivity, divorced from time, and brought into stasis. That the sequence of pictures is a scroll, moreover, is crucial. For if, according to Hans Belting, the European medieval imaginary was populated chiefly by ‘an imaginary collection of single pictures’, then one cannot help but wonder what role the pictorial scroll played in structuring the way in which GoShirakawa and his contemporaries constructed their own autobiographical imagi-naries.40 This merits pause, since it would mean that montage and moving sequential images were a part of the period understanding of pictorial narrative, features that Belting argues would remain dormant until the advent of cinema.41 The elegiac overtones of such an enterprise are difficult to deny. These pictures represent pictorial snippets of his visual imaginary, or at the very least they represent specimens of the types of pictures that would have been used to prime, calibrate, and develop the Emperor’s own epistemic ability to make visual sense of his auto-biography and his world. Heian courtiers frequently looked to the literary and especially the poetic canon for opportunities to draw...
autobiographical analogies. Indeed, in this courtly milieu autobiographical analogy could be a politically freighted move, so much so that the scholar Joshua Mostow has argued that it qualifies as a form of cultural appropriation.42 Pictures played a key role in these dynamics. Suffice it to say, those of the Eyeless are likely quite similar to the types of pictorial narratives in which the Emperor might have seen himself during his life.

On a material level, several contemporaneous practices and artefacts further support the notion that the pictorial expanse of the Eyeless was meant to represent the Emperor through aniconic or extra-iconic means. The most obvious analogue is a form of pictorial journalling known as e-nikki (絵日記) described in period documents. 43 No exemplar survives, meaning one can only speculate whether or not the drawings within such diaries might have looked similar to the scenes of the Eyeless. As memorial sūtras, however, if the papers are indeed repurposed then the Eyeless begs comparison to a genre known as hogukyō (literally ‘old-paper sūtras’ 反故経), whereby various texts taken from various moments in the deceased’s life (often letters, but sometimes poetry, mundane inscription, or even books owned by the deceased) were assembled and repurposed—either by washing, writing on the back of the pages, or fully repulping—to form handscrolls that could be used for the creation of a ‘merit-transfer’ sūtra.44 Hence previous scholars’ temptation to interpret the longer Eyeless colophon to say the pictures are autographic and thus reflect the very hand of the Emperor. Needless to say, such inscriptive traces were linked directly to specific biographical moments. To arrange them into a span is to place their individual chronologies in tension with the ground-span of the scroll. Moreover, given that epistolary texts were by definition the primary premodern means of circumventing discursive absence, their use in a memorial setting—a situation similarly defined by an absent presence—seems particularly befitting. As with such objects, the Eyeless brings multiple moments within a narrative together, ‘twists’ or disorders them beyond recognition, and arranges them into a band, making the disordered representatives of a lost life into a new ground for scriptural replication. Strictly speaking all memorial transcriptions might be thought of as attempts to form a presence from material absence, for according to the tripartite doctrinal understanding of the Buddha’s corporeality, each recension of a sūtra does not merely represent Buddhist discourse but is a material instantiation of his bodily presence. Such artefacts thus transformed postmortem inscriptive detritus into the very material ground of sacred immanence.

The Eyeless was not the only object of its era to layer Buddhist sūtra text and pictures.
In notable contrast are two celebrated manuscripts in codex format: a late-twelfth-century transcription of the Lotus Sutra (Myōhō renge kyo, T 262) and a mid-twelfth-century transcription of the Sutra of Visualising the Bodhisattva Fugen (Kan Fugen bosatsu gyōbō kyo, T 227). In the former, the Lotus Sutra is transcribed over polychromatic genre scenes not unlike the monochromatic line drawings of the Eyeless (fig. 7.16). By contrast, however, the latter manuscript uses its pagination to insert dramatic interludes in the text, with two-page spreads of sūtra-over-pictures interrupted by mica-printed luxury papers inscribed with poems written in the Japanese kana script (fig. 7.17). These manuscripts make clear that periodic interjection, overlay, and visual ‘noise’ were considered desirable in luxury sūtra transcriptions. Needless to say, the undisputed completeness of these codices further strengthens the case for considering the Eyeless complete.

The argument presented here rests upon a heterochronic undertaking of narrative and biography, one that highlights the ability for the pictorial to depart from the temporal progression implied by the material page. It also treats the present as ‘specious’, an illusion constructed from temporal retentions and protentions. A recent turn in scholarship spearheaded by Georges Didi-Huberman argues that objects, too, embody and participate in similarly complex temporal extensions. Rather than being limited hermeneutically to their historical moment of ‘euchronic consonance’, an object’s temporal stance is Janus-faced, including both the ‘more-than-past of memory’ as well as all future interpretations the object will prefigure. We thus find ourselves, writes Didi-Huberman, ‘before the painted surface as an object of complex, impure temporality: an extraordinary montage of heterogeneous times forming anachronisms’. His theory—and especially this final phrase—seems particularly well suited to the Eyeless. If anything, the scroll format complicates Didi-Huberman’s anachronicity, since its ground-span contributes an additional chronological substrate to the image it hosts.

Accordingly, the most rigorous historical contextualisation of a marked surface will require departure from its strict historical context. In the case of the Eyeless, the horizontal splicing and stratigraphic layering of the inscription further complicates matters, such that any ‘reading’ of the manuscript must somehow account for its multiplex temporality. To begin, note that there are several narratives here at play: the mythical ‘original’ tale of the pictures, the life of the Emperor, the process of transcription, and the modern gaze. As adumbrated earlier in this essay, through allegoresis one can read the Eyeless Sūtras such that the world of the faceless pictures is seen to be evocative of the world of the Emperor. That is one type of anachronism. In addition, through analysing the lay of the calligraphy in relation to the pictures, one can reconstruct the transcribers’ careful decisions about
where and how to situate the text. Such traces of their intentionality constitute an idiosyncratic ‘reading’ of both the pictures and the inscribed texts. Indeed, as Reginald Jackson notes in his study of the Genji Scrolls, ‘mourning operates as a catalyst for gestures resembling reading and as a mode of reading itself.’ Hence the second temporal layer. The third type of anachronism, however, is more complex. So far, we have focused solely on the planar dimension of chronology (left-right for the horizontal scrolls) since this is the index of the ground-span. Yet discontinuity and heterochrony also operate along the perpendicular axis (i.e., surface-depth) through the stratigraphy of the image. In other words, to shift our focus to the stūra text, one can break or decontextualize a given text sequence by making it participate in the pictorial stratum that subsumes it. For instance, note the appearance in the Eyeless of a man, with a brush in hand, apparently at work transcribing a text (fig. 7.18). Just over his body the stūra text reads—completely broken from syntactic context—‘I/We made an offering’ (我供養). Suddenly there seems to be correspondence between the intended text and the accidental pictures. Idiosyncratic and highly isolated, such ‘stratigraphic reading’ makes the artefact seem surprisingly self-referential. The textual may materially superscribe the pictorial, but the pictorial hermeneutically supervenes. Time and meaning bleed from one stratum to the other. I have addressed the full complexity of such stratigraphic reading in the Eyeless and other Japanese artefacts elsewhere. Suffice it to say, however, when one considers the extent of heterochrony present in both the horizontal expanse and the stratigraphic depths of the Eyeless, its relationship to temporal continuity becomes complex indeed.

In closing, if the scroll is a medium defined by its relationship to continuity, and death the biographical moment defined by discontinuity, then the use of a scroll in a memorial context is significant. Hence the need to situate the Eyeless in the liminal context of mourning—its euchronic context, in Didi-Huberman’s terms—wherein GoShirakawa’s living presence ceased, to be replaced by the disordered images and traces inscribed in the material archive and in the memories of those who survived him. On the occasion of the death of perhaps the most pictorially literate person of his time, the decision was made to weave soteriologically freighted writing into a pictorial continuum made of concatenated, achronological, and ossified pictures...
of the very type that had populated the deceased's visual imaginary. Regardless of the motivation, if for no other reason than the presence of in-painting, the prevailing understanding of these pictures as recycled sketches deserves scrutiny. At the very least one cannot deny that Mrs. S. Arthur Strong (New York: Macmillan, 1900), pp. 1–21.

25. Whitney, Roll and Codex, p. 16.


27. For an important intervention, see the appendix in Whitney, Roll and Codex: "The Scene of Represen-


29. Wickhoff, Roman Art, pp. 14. Moreover, he cautiously argues (p. 16) that the continuous mode came from 'Asian' art. The terms roughly align with what scholars of nar-

30. Meyer Schapiro, 'On Some Problems in the Semio-


32. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 18–19.

33. Wickhoff seems to have been unfairly overshadowed by scholars of narrative such as Mieke Bal, Gerard Genette, and Meir Sternberg. For a study of the Shōtoku paintings, see Kevin Gray

34. These terms roughly align with what scholars of nar-

35. For a study of the Shōtoku paintings, see Kevin Gray

36. Tanabe, Lotus Sutra, pp. 58–60. Kornicki, Book in


38. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 18–19.

39. Indeed, even Weitzmann admitted that biographical

40. Make the Dust Dance: The Ryōjin Hishō of T

41. Belting, Anthropology, p. 28.

42. Joshua S. Mostow, Courtesian Visions: The Heian

43. 'Menashikyō ni tsuite', Bijutsu kenkyū 9 (1940): pp. 264–78.

44. Tanabe, Lotus Sutra, pp. 58–60. Kornicki, Book in

45. I borrow the concept of 'noise' in Heian manuscript

46. Kornicki, Book in

47. While Edmund Husserl and William James are often


49. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, p. 17.

50. Jackson, Textures of Mourning, p. 277

51. 'Vertical' is typically contradicted with 'lateral' but

52. Kenyon, 'Stratigraphy and Story', as well as in a for-

53. Kenyon, 'Stratigraphy and Story', as well as in a for-

54. Joshua S. Mostow, "Picture" in the Tale of Gen-


56. Tanabe, Lotus Sutra, pp. 58–60. Kornicki, Book in

57. Joshua S. Mostow, "Picture" in the Tale of Gen-


60. Buhler, Anthropology, p. 28.

61. Joshua S. Mostow, Courtesian Visions: The Heian

62. For a recent analysis of a sūtra transcription on re-

63. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 5–7.

64. The plural sūtras is preferred here since it

65. This claim is implicit but not asserted in Hans Bel-


68. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 5–7.


70. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 5–7.


73. Weitzmann, Roll and Codex, pp. 5–7.

74. The plural sūtras is preferred here since it

75. This claim is implicit but not asserted in Hans Bel-

